

American

NEWS & VIEWS

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President Obama: Advanced Economies Lay Plans for Economic Growth

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr. | Staff Writer

Washington — President Obama says the Group of 20 nations have worked together and made progress toward strengthening the global economy, averting another recession and putting the world on the path to recovery.

“As a result, advanced economies, including the United States, are growing and creating jobs, but not nearly fast enough,” the president said.

At a press conference November 4, Obama said the G20 nations agreed to stay focused on jobs and economic growth through an extensive plan that calls for greater coordination on individual national actions and policies. The G20 leaders also made progress toward rebalancing the global economy in an effort to lessen sharp swings in the economic cycle that can lead to recessions, he added.

The G20 countries held their annual leaders’ summit in the French resort town of Cannes November 3–4. The next summit will be held in Mexico’s Los Cabos, Baja California, in June 2012.

Obama said Europe remains on track to implement a sustainable path for Greece, which is facing a debt crisis. He added that Italy asked the International Monetary Fund, which worked with the European Union on the crisis in Greece, to provide a quarterly monitoring program as Italy implements “fully and swiftly” a comprehensive plan of growth-enhancing reforms.

“All of us have an enormous interest in Europe’s success, and all of us will be affected if Europe is not growing — and that certainly includes the United States, which counts Europe as our largest trading partner,” Obama told reporters. “And that’s why I’ve made it clear that the United States will continue to do our part to support our European partners as they work to resolve this crisis.”

“But our European partners have laid a foundation on which to build, and it has all the elements needed for success: a credible firewall to prevent the crisis from spreading, strengthening European banks, charting a sustainable path for Greece, and confronting the structural issues that are at the heart of the current crisis,” Obama said.

The White House said the United States is committed to the timely implementation of a package of measures to sustain its own economic recovery through public investments, tax reforms and targeted employment measures.

The G20 nations also adopted a set of high-level financial reforms to prevent a crisis in the future, Obama said. The leaders also agreed to phase out fossil fuel subsidies, in an effort to fight climate change and to create clean-energy economies.

While in Cannes, Obama met with French President Nicolas Sarkozy and German Chancellor Angela Merkel individually to discuss the European debt crisis.

Obama told reporters that it was the most important aspect of the summit over the two days of meetings among the 20 world leaders.

“We also discussed the situation in Greece and how we can work to help resolve that situation as well. And the United States will continue to be a partner with the Europeans to resolve these challenges,” he said.

At APEC, a High-Powered Learning Experience

By Jeff Baron | Staff Writer

Washington — The annual Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit is a chance for high-level business and government officials to strengthen relationships.

For a select group of students representing the member economies of the region, it’s also a chance to learn while making connections.

Days before President Obama welcomes leaders of the other Asia-Pacific economies to his boyhood hometown of Honolulu on November 12, more than 70 students from most of the 21 APEC member economies will assemble there for the APEC Voices of the Future program, which includes a week of discussions, tours and close contact with business leaders from throughout the region.

“These students really get a great opportunity to see firsthand what business and economics looks like from a professional standpoint,” said Cindy Youssef, a former student delegate from the United States and now a Voices educator and manager of diversity programs at Furman University’s Riley Institute. “They are no longer called ‘students’ when they arrive at the conference: They become ‘citizen diplomats.’”

The young delegates receive media passes for high-level APEC events, allowing them to interview business executives, attend seminars and see “how international development is put into place,” Youssef said.

“They are talented young people who have all the necessary skills, abilities and ambitions necessary” to be future foreign ministers and multinational chief executives, said Aleksandra Tatomir, an educator with the

Russian delegation who teaches at the Institute of International Relations at Far Eastern Federal University in Vladivostok. Voices of the Future “is a tool for them to train these skills, to make necessary connections and start taking action,” she said.

The selection process for each member economy’s youth delegates varies, as do their fields of study, but they must be 18 to 25 years old and focused on Asia-Pacific issues.

Even students who don’t attend the summit benefit from the experience of those who do, Youssef said. Delegates from Furman write blogs from the summit and later work on symposiums and publications for other students and the university community.

The connections among the student delegates continue long after the summit ends. Youssef said that participants keep in touch through social media and that she still has close friends scattered around the Pacific Rim from her week as a delegate in Santiago, Chile, in 2004. “Anywhere you travel, you’ve got a new travel companion,” she said.

State’s Burns: “Networks of Cooperation” Can Aid Pacific Nations

By Stephen Kaufman | Staff Writer

Washington — The world’s “economic and strategic center of gravity” is shifting toward the Asia-Pacific region, and the United States hopes to build more linkages between the hemispheres that will benefit everyone living in Asia and the Americas, says Deputy Secretary of State William Burns.

“Asia’s rise has been so dramatic that it is not just remaking Asia’s cities and economies — it is redrawing the geostrategic map,” and the United States “must think strategically” as it looks forward, Burns said November 4 at the World Affairs Councils of America national conference.

“Our challenge is not to pull it back, but to make sure that a rising tide of economic prosperity lifts all boats and economic renewal at home creates new opportunities for the American people. Our challenge is not to contain rising powers in East Asia, South Asia or Latin America, but to lead in creating global networks of cooperation that benefit everyone,” he said.

Burns also said the relations the United States has with China and India are extremely important.

The relationship between the United States and China is “complex,” Burns said, and that means that “neither conflict nor cooperation is preordained” between the two countries.

“For all our differences, we have a lot more to gain by working together than by working apart. And no bilateral relationship is likely to matter more to the interests of each of our countries, or to the future of international order, in the new century unfolding before us,” he said.

The United States is looking to India, as the world’s largest democracy with an economy that is projected to be the world’s third-largest within 20 years, to help in strengthening regional trade institutions, such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the East Asia Summit. “An architecture of free trade and investment that connects India to Southeast and East Asia will have a profound impact on global trade and economic growth,” Burns said.

The United States is seeking a 21st century Asia-Pacific region in which India, China and the United States all enjoy good relations, he said.

“Whatever our differences, we know that, as this century advances, fewer and fewer global problems will be solvable without constructive cooperation amongst our three great countries. To paraphrase India’s national security adviser, I have no doubt that Asia and the world are big enough for the three of us — if we want them to be,” he said.

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Latin America’s success has not been as widely reported as Asia’s, but Burns said that almost 50 percent of the population, or 275 million people, is now in the middle class, and that is expected to reach 72 percent by 2030.

“Over the next five years, the economies of Latin America and the Caribbean could grow by one-third,” he said, and their growth has a greater positive impact on the United States than does trade with partners in Asia.

Burns said 43 percent of U.S. exports stay in the Western Hemisphere and U.S. companies export more than three times as much to Latin America as they do to China.

The challenge now for all Asia-Pacific nations is to “think of those increasingly interconnected regions as an integrated whole, a broader Pacific with commonalities beyond geographic proximity,” he said.

“Our strategies in each region must be mutually reinforcing, and should identify complementarities and build upon them. We can leverage our partners on one end of the ocean to advance our goals on the other end. We must exert our leadership in each region to build the Pacific Century we seek,” Burns said.

U.S. Documentary Producer Takes His Stories to China

By Jane Morse | Staff Writer

Washington — As the founder and executive producer of *Frontline*, the longest-running investigative documentary series on U.S. television, David Fanning is defying powerful trends in journalism.

“In a world of fragmented, fractured information, where it’s all being broken up into bite-sized bits and spun as a kind of daily drumbeat of news and information, it’s the rarer enterprise that stops and takes the longer view and tries to gather together and make sense of the world,” Fanning said. “And, if anything, that’s enormously important in our culture. ... I think it’s important in any culture to be able to do that.”

Fanning, who has spent his whole career in journalism and filmmaking, calls his approach “narrative journalism,” which he defines as “storytelling.”

“Long-form documentary storytelling is a central art, craft and literary enterprise,” he said.

Fanning will be taking his storytelling to China November 16-19 as part of a groundbreaking arts and culture forum sponsored by the Asia Society, the Aspen Institute, the Chinese People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries and the Embassy of the United States in Beijing.

This isn’t Fanning’s first trip to China. A few years ago — along with Tom Bettag, who worked for 14 years as the executive producer for ABC TV’s news program *Nightline* — he conducted a weeklong seminar for China Central Television (CCTV) on documentary television for producers.

“We had some really productive sessions together with [Chinese] producers who worked under extraordinary deadlines with very short turnarounds for producing hours and hours of documentary programming literally to millions of viewers,” Fanning said. The focus, he said, was on “narrative techniques and some of the voices and the ways in which one tries to approach storytelling — looking for ways to do that efficiently but also do it in a dramatic structure. ... We found a lot of common ground, and it was a most enjoyable experience.”

For the November 16-19 U.S.-China Forum on the Arts and Culture, Fanning will be participating with his Chinese counterparts in a panel discussion called “The Power of Narrative Story Telling: Covering the World through Photography, Film and Print.” Among the panelists will be Susan Meiselas, a photographer who has worked around the world and is perhaps best known for

her coverage of events in Latin America, and Mark Danner, a prominent writer, journalist and educator who specializes in U.S. foreign affairs. Cheng Gang, a journalist with the *Global Times*, is also slated to participate.

In addition to the journalists, others participating include American actress Meryl Streep, film director Joel Coen, musician Yo-Yo Ma, writer Michael Pollan, painter Eric Fischl, best-selling author Amy Tan and former ballet dancer turned director Damian Woetzel. They will speak and perform in events with their Chinese counterparts in what U.S. Ambassador to China Gary Locke has said he hopes will be “the first of many annual events of this type, alternating between China and the United States.”

“I think conversations among people on an individual level between these two societies are enormously important,” Fanning said. “Anything we can do that helps to draw some contact between the two is important.”

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